

Coast 2050

A Regional Approach for Strategic Coastal Planning



According to current available estimates, coastal Louisiana is losing an average of 25 to 35 square miles of land annually. This drastic change in our landscape is already having noticeable effects in some areas on a broad range of important quality of life issues.

The good news is that the overall state and national economies are relatively healthy and coastal wetland conservation and restoration efforts are moving faster than ever before. In fact, there is an average annual investment of approximately \$50 million in coastal restoration projects. While it is clear that we will not be able to maintain the amount of coast we currently have, it is equally clear that these restoration projects will make a huge difference. But it is critical that these projects compliment other coastal use objectives.

Consequently, DNR (in cooperation with the State Wetlands Authority and the Breaux Act Task Force) has started a new initiative of strategic coastal ecosystem planning and management. Coast 2050 is a planning process that anticipates

conditions in the year 2050, and seeks to maximize the overall public support and the effectiveness of coastal restoration efforts. Coast 2050 was jointly initiated as a collective effort among the Louisiana Wetland Conservation and Restoration Authority (Louisiana Wetland Authority), the Coastal Wetland Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (Breaux Act) Task Force, and the Department of Natural Resources Coastal Zone Management Authority.

Coast 2050 is distinguished from other existing conservation and management plans in Louisiana by three important factors: (1) a Coastal Zone Management Work Group will join the planning process by providing an avenue for local input; (2) in addition to the current land loss issues, wetland restoration projects will also address other coastal uses such as fisheries, navigation, flood protection, and mineral resources; and (3) the program strategy will orchestrate the state's existing Coastal Management program, Strategic Coastal Conservation and Restoration Plan, and the 1993 Breaux Act Restoration Plan, so that they all work in unison toward a common goal consistent with the welfare of the citizens of Louisiana.

For the purposes of Coast 2050, the coastal zone of Louisiana was divided into four regions (see illustration). The four regions represent reasonably distinct areas in terms of geology and hydrology, and provide a convenient framework to facilitate local input concerning regional planning strategies and objectives. The objectives for restoration efforts in each of these

regions will be solicited from the public, special interest groups, academia, and other affected interests. The process itself is one of plan development that is based on an open forum where technical experts, agency representatives and the public representatives ensure that restoration concepts are discussed openly in a dialectic process.

The scientific and technical aspects of Coast 2050 are conducted through the Strategic Work Group comprised of the Breaux Act Technical Committee members and the State Wetlands Authority members and is co-chaired by Dr. Bill Good, Administrator of the Department of Natural Resources Coastal Restoration Division, and Robert Schroeder, Jr. of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The public input process is being handled through a Coastal Zone Management Work Group. The membership of this committee includes parish governments or their Coastal Zone Management Advisory Committees, and is chaired by DNR Deputy Secretary, Dr. Steve Mathies. They are responsible for soliciting and integrating public objectives for coastal restoration efforts. It is important to recognize that not only does the public have a place at the table in *Coast 2050*, they have their own table. The Coastal Zone Management Work Group will ensure that federal, state, local, private, academic, and public involvement will be represented in the planning initiatives.

As part of the first step of soliciting input, *Coast 2050* planning meetings were held to solicit public input in each of the four coastal

regions. The goals of these meetings were to: (1) solicit input on important coastal resources and uses from local governments, special interest groups, and citizens; (2) solicit public opinion and recommendations on coastal planning and restoration objectives; and (3) interact with coastal scientists in order to help develop a technically sound strategic plan to sustain coastal resources and provide an integrated multiple use approach to ecosystem management. DNR would like to thank all those who attended one or more of these meetings and those who provided valuable input. Without cooperative efforts between federal, state, and local authorities, academia, and private citizens, the investment in our coastal ecosystems would provide the full measure of future benefits that our citizens deserve.

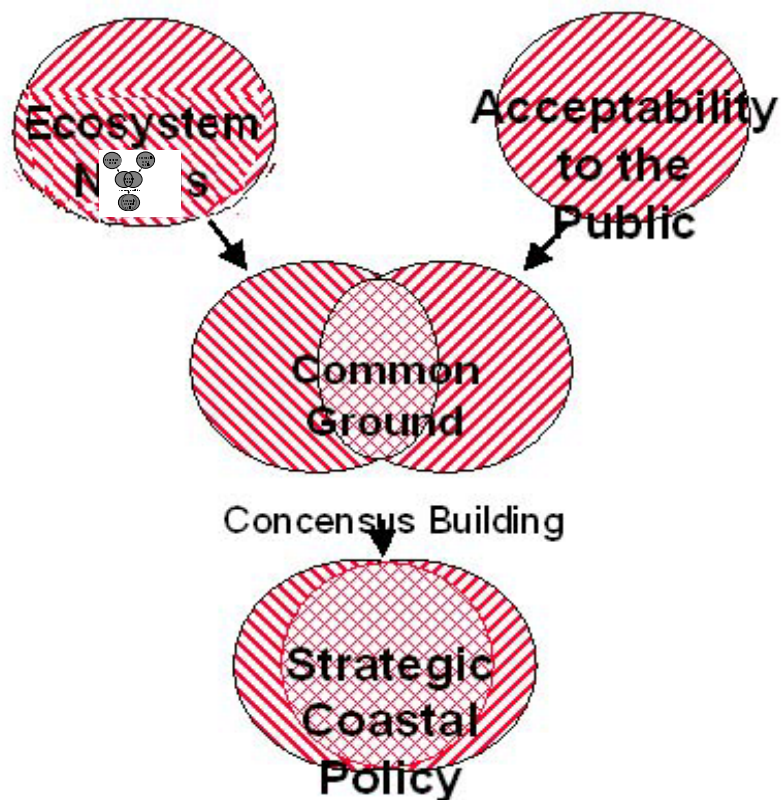
COAST 2050 GOAL

The ***Coast 2050*** Coastwide Ecosystem Management Plan will provide avenues for sustaining coastal

resources and providing an integrated multiple use approach to ecosystem management. This plan will include such site specific factors as fish and wildlife productivity; transportation, navigation and utilities infrastructure; fresh water supplies; public safety; local economies, businesses, jobs, and community stability. The plan will incorporate comments and recommendations submitted through the public meeting forum as well as those submitted directly to DNR, and will attempt to address concerns at the local, regional, and coastwide levels. The plan will be submitted to the Breaux Act Task Force, the State Wetlands Authority, and the DNR Coastal Zone Management Authority in December 1998 for approval.

Citizens and community leaders are urged to get involved. DNR needs your help for Coast 2050 to succeed. We need input from local

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governments, environmentalists, fishermen, industry leaders, local planners, civic organizations and the public.

For more information, or to submit comments or suggestions, please contact the CWPPRA Outreach

Coordinator, Jay Gamble, at (504)3423968, or the DNR Coast 2050 coordinator, Steve Gammill at (504) 342-7308 or e-mail him at Steveng@dnr.state.la.us.

Ecological Day Teaches Young Students to Protect the Environment

The first in a series of *Earth and Environment Days* was held September 26th at John L. Ory Elementary School in LaPlace. State Representative Robert "Bobby" Faucheux has planned the activity to take place in a number of

elementary schools throughout his legislative district (District 57) during the fall months of this year. Representative Faucheux's staff has worked with area school principals in coordinating this extracurricular educational activity.

Representative Faucheux said his idea for *Earth and Environment Days* was organized to provide young children with additional opportunities to learn and understand issues and programs unique to the state of Louisiana. He sees the *Earth and Environment Days* educational activity as classroom enrichment for students. As part of the science curriculum, *Earth and Environment Days* will get the children involved with specific topics outside of the textbook, he said.

The state government departments of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Fisheries, and Environmental Quality are participating in the planned activity. The three agencies will have hands-on materials as well as motivating and animated presentations for the children on topics including water resources, wildlife habitat, and coastal protection and management.



Louisiana's Coastweeks will be celebrated for the twelfth year - September 20 through October 13. The featured event to be held on Saturday, September 20th, the great Louisiana Beach Sweep, kicks off the annual celebration supported by the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), local zone coordinators, volunteers, and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Coastweeks is a national campaign designed to educate Americans about

Louisiana's spokeswoman and chairperson for the 1997 Beach Sweep and Inland Waterway



Cleanup, First Lady Alice Foster, said the multi-week celebration allows citizens of all ages to become involved in helping care for our state's coastal areas and wetlands.

Governor Foster's statewide proclamation on Coastweeks recommends that Louisianians concentrate on stopping pollution, and encourages all citizens of the state to become good stewards of the environment.

Coastal resources have a significant impact on the nation's economy so many organizations and volunteers around the country are involved with providing educational materials as part of the Coastweeks campaign. The Center for Marine Conservation in Virginia serves as the national sponsor.

The 1997 Beach Sweep and Inland Waterway Cleanup will focus on cleaning up the state's waterways and beaches while recording the amount and types of materials found during the cleanup. State Beach Sweep Coordinator Gwen Emick and 23 coordinators are working with thousands of volunteers scheduled to pick up some 200 miles of coastline and beach litter.

Throughout Coastweeks, DNR emphasizes the slogan, "celebrate, educate, and participate" and provides educational information about the state's coastal program to interested citizens and groups. Call or write the Coastweeks Co-ordinator, Peggy Rooney, 625 North 4th Street, 13th Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70804 at (504) 342-0557.

Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program Update

Polluted runoff, or nonpoint source pollution has become our nation's biggest water quality problem. It has contributed to creation of both the "Hypoxic Zone" off Louisiana's coast, and to contaminated lake sediments found in the middle of Baton Rouge. DNR's Coastal Management Division (CMD) staff conducts public out-reach and education on nonpoint source pollution impacts to coastal resources and on how we can help tackle this problem.

Louisiana's Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program (CNPCP) draft plan document was submitted under the signatures of the secretaries of DNR and DEQ to federal reviewers in the autumn of 1995. In August 1996, NOAA and EPA issued draft findings granting conditional approval to Louisiana's draft plan. Language conveying Louisiana's response was worked out between the state agencies,

DNR, DEQ, and DAF, and communicated to federal officials in mid-summer of 1997. Ironically, as this response was en route, federal reviewers were releasing final findings which had little changes from the draft version of the pre-vious year. The conditions imposed in the findings are viewed by many as too harsh. On the other hand, some say that the submitted program is not protective enough of coastal resources, and should not have been granted conditional approval. Public input is encouraged and comments regarding the findings should be sent to NOAA and EPA through October 20 of this year.

For further information regarding this topic, contact Greg DuCote at (504) 342-5052 or Ed Britton at (504) 342-4602.

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